

## **5.0 OTHER DISCUSSIONS REQUIRED BY CEQA**

### **5.1 Effects Found not to be Significant**

#### **5.1.1 Energy Resources**

CEQA considers impacts to energy resources to be significant if the project would conflict with adopted energy conservation plans or use non-renewable resources in a wasteful and inefficient manner. The Initial Study for the project indicated that the project has a less than significant impact on energy resources as it does not conflict with any energy conservation plans nor is it expected to use non-renewable resources in a wasteful and inefficient manner.

### **5.2 Significant Environmental Effects Which Cannot be Avoided if the Proposed Project is Implemented**

Implementation of the proposed project would result in one significant unavoidable environmental effect. Although mitigated, the construction-related emissions of NO<sub>x</sub> will exceed significance thresholds on a temporary basis during construction. For all other project impacts, mitigation measures will be implemented to avoid or reduce significant environmental effects to below a level of significance as outlined in Chapter 3.0 of this Draft EIR.

### **5.3 Significant Irreversible Environmental Changes Which Would be Caused by the Proposed Project Should it be Implemented**

#### **5.3.1 Aesthetics**

Implementation of the proposed Whisper Creek Subdivision would cause irreversible changes to the viewshed of the project area. Existing rural and agricultural land would be converted to rural residential single-family housing units. Implementation of mitigation measures outlined in Chapter 3.0 of this Draft EIR will reduce significant impacts to below a level of significance.

#### **5.3.2 Biological Resources**

Implementation of the project would result in direct impacts to biological resources. Impacts as a result of construction of the Whisper Creek Subdivision to ephemeral wetlands, raptor nesting and foraging habitat, and to migratory birds, are long-term, permanent impacts, and thus, are considered irreversible and irretrievable once incurred.

### **5.4 Any Irreversible or Irretrievable Commitments of Resources that would be Involved in the Proposed Project if Implemented**

Implementation of the proposed project would develop housing that is essentially irreversible. Once the housing is constructed, it would be unlikely that it would be removed in the future. The proposed project would cause the following irreversible changes.

#### **5.4.1 Energy**

Approval and construction of the Whisper Creek Subdivision would result in an irretrievable commitment of nonrenewable resources such as energy supplies and other construction-related

resources. These energy resource demands would be used for construction, heating and cooling of temporary buildings, and transportation of people and goods to and from the project site. However, the use of energy is minor and temporary in nature, and therefore, is not considered to be significant.

## **5.5 Growth-Inducing Impact of the Proposed Project**

An Environmental Impact Report must discuss the ways in which a proposed project could foster economic or population growth or the construction of additional housing in the vicinity of the project, and how that growth will, in turn, affect the surrounding environment (CEQA Guidelines Section 15126.2(d)). Included in this are projects which would remove obstacles to population growth (such as a major expansion of a wastewater treatment plant, which might allow for more construction in service areas). Increases in the population may tax existing community service facilities, requiring construction of new facilities that could cause significant environmental effects. The Draft EIR must also discuss the characteristics of the proposed project which may encourage and facilitate other activities that could significantly affect the environment, either individually or cumulatively. As stated in the CEQA Guidelines, it must not be assumed that growth in any area is necessarily beneficial, detrimental, or of little significance to the environment.

With the adoption of the Dry Creek-West Placer Community Plan and EIR in 1990 and the Dry Creek-West Placer Community Facilities District and associated EIR in 1994, the Placer County Board of Supervisors put in place the regulatory framework for the eventual development of approximately 4,500 acres within the 9,200 acre Community Plan area. The adopted Community Plan calls for the eventual development of between 4,215 and 5,479 dwelling units. All of the growth inducing impacts for development within the Dry Creek-West Placer Community Plan occurred with the adoption of these two actions along with associated rezoning the land. In the intervening years, infrastructure improvements including the extension of sewer, enlargement of sewer treatment facilities, and road widening have either been constructed or are identified in adopted capital improvement plans. Both the Community Plan and Community Facilities District EIRs are hereby incorporated by reference.

Concurrently with adoption of the Placer County General Plan in 1994, the Placer County Board of Supervisors adopted Resolution No. 94-238 which amended the Dry Creek-West Placer Community Plan to include development on the remaining 4,700 acres within the Plan area. The amendments to both the General Plan and the Community Plan paved the way for consideration of additional growth in the area under a specific plan process. The result of that action has been the submittal of the Placer Vineyards Specific Plan which proposes 14,132 dwelling units along with associated commercial development. During the General Plan adoption process, the Board acknowledged that the proposed amendment to the General Plan would foster growth within the County and they also designated new growth areas. In adopting the General Plan they made the necessary findings to support that decision. Section 10.5 of the Draft Environmental Impact Report for the Placer County General Plan Update (SCH#93082012) is incorporated by reference and includes the following statement regarding growth-inducing impacts:

Arguably, any general plan that designates undeveloped land for future development can be defined as “growth-inducing.” Since one of the County’s clear objectives in updating its

General Plan is the promotion of economic development and accommodation of demand for residential growth, this is the case with the Draft Countywide General Plan. In promoting such development and accommodating such growth, the Draft General Plan, however, attempts to address all the potentially adverse implications through policies, programs, and proposals for adequate infrastructure, promotion of a reasonable balance between jobs and housing, and protection of environmentally-sensitive resources.

Build-out of 104 single-family dwellings in the Whisper Creek project was anticipated under the Community Plan and Community Facilities District EIRs. This growth was adequately documented and planned for and will not create shortfalls in necessary services. Given the amount of development that has already occurred within the Community Plan or is contemplated through existing development applications, it is extremely unlikely that the development of the Whisper Creek project would facilitate or induce growth in areas not accounted for in the Community Plan or Facilities District EIRs. For this reason, the growth inducing effects of the project would be less than significant.